

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in the application, claims 1-22 stand rejected. No claims have been amended, canceled or added and accordingly claims 1-22 are now pending in the case.

Applicants wish to express their gratitude for the courtesy extended to them during the Examiner's interview on December 9, 2002 by Examiner Ruhl. During the interview, Applicants discussed the references relied upon by the Patent Office in the above referenced Office Action, namely Mizutani and Fung.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 12, 14-16 and 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mizutani (US 5,613,960). Mizutani discloses a disposable body fluids absorbent padding formed with a liquid guiding fibrous sheet interposed between a liquid permeable topsheet and a liquid-absorbent core. The fibrous sheet is intermittently fused to the topsheet by a plurality of fused spots in a lattice pattern as shown in Figure 1. Each of the fused spots is disclosed as being compressed to have a high density and to form a groove along which body fluids may diffusely flow and be rapidly guided into the core. Applicants provided the Examiner with samples of a sanitary napkin which was believed by Applicant to illustrate the technology taught in the Mizutani reference. More specifically, the sanitary napkin sample is believed to have a topsheet fused to a lower fibrous layer as taught by Mizutani. As demonstrated during the interview, the sample sanitary napkin did not possess an identifiable preferential bending zone that extended along the pattern of fused bonding between the topsheet and lower fibrous layer.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, 12, 14-16 and 18-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fung et al. (US 5,423,486). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Fung et al teaches an absorbent core for use in an absorbent product. The absorbent core comprises an absorbent batt that is folded upon itself along a pair of generally parallel longitudinally extending fold lines to form a middle body-facing panel and two side

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panels. Applicants provided the Examiner with a sample of an absorbent core which was believed by Applicant to illustrate the technology taught in the Fung reference. More specifically, the absorbent core was compressed with embossed channels in a pattern as taught by Fung. As demonstrated during the interview, the sample absorbent core, did not possess an identifiable preferential bending zone that extends obliquely to the longitudinal axis and which extends from one longitudinal side area to an opposite longitudinal side area.

Accordingly, for the reasons of record filed in response to the previous Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references fail to destroy the patentability of the present claimed invention.

Claims 1-22 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 3-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,312,416.

Claims 1-22 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-14 of copending Application No. 09/374,512, and over claims 1 and 4-19 of copending Application No. 09/477,244.

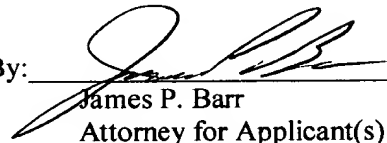
Applicants have submitted herewith a terminal disclosure to obviate the provisional double patenting rejections, and thus believe that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

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Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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